

**BETHLEHEM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2011**

Members of the Board Human Resources Committee met on Monday, September 19, 2011, in the Dining Room, at the Education Center. Present were the following school board members: William Burkhardt, Michele Cann, Michael Faccinetto, Irene Follweiler, Loretta Leeson, Eugene McKeon, Aurea Ortiz, and Benjamin Tenaglia. Also in attendance were Supervisor of Minority Affairs Vivian Robledo-Shorey, Director of Special Education Richard Agretto, Director of Human Resources Russell R. Giordano, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Jack Silva, and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph J. Roy.

The meeting of the Board Human Resources Committee was called to order by Mr. Michael Faccinetto at 7:45 p.m.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR – None

BOARD POLICY 204.1 – TEMPORARY MEDICAL EXCUSAL – SECOND READING – Mrs. Robledo-Shorey stated that during the first reading, the board requested to make sure it was clearly defined that a temporary medical excusal is provided and then the district could consider tutoring. She directed the board to the revised copy of the policy and pointed out the bold section with the revision. Mrs. Leeson had several questions and not so much on this policy. She stated, “I understand from students in the past, there has been difficulty in getting their work when they have been unavailable for a period of time. This might not apply to this policy because the period of time is not long enough, but they are having difficulty getting their work. From what I am hearing, it is inconsistent. Some students get their work and some do not. Before passing this medical excusal policy, I would like us to clean up and tighten up some of the procedures on how we address students who are going to be out for a shorter period of time, but still a period of time.” Dr. Roy agreed that this does not fall under this policy. Mrs. Leeson said, “It does not, but it is contingent somewhat on it because here we are going to make more limitations on homebound instruction, and if students are not able to get their work, now we are going to add additional limitations. We really need to get the two pieces put together in order for the whole system to work.” Mrs. Robledo-Shorey stated that the time frame has not changed. It was always four weeks for middle and elementary and two weeks for high school. The other piece to this is really just cleaning up the language and making more things clear. Mrs. Robledo-Shorey also added, “I do not know if they are together, but there are concerns with collecting work for students.” Dr. Roy commented those inconsistencies need to be looked at. Mrs. Leeson added that the process by which it is done, does it go through a guidance counselor, does it go through the teachers, does the district want parents to email teachers for the assignments, and what is the district process and procedures because it seems to be not typically unified. Dr. Silva stated he would have a recommendation tonight that will address her concern.

Mr. Burkhardt asked if the board would still vote on this policy. Mr. Faccinetto stated that the board can move forward with this to a third reading next week and then vote as we work on filling the gaps between the time this kicks in. Dr. Roy stated that this policy would replace Board Policy 117. Mrs. Robledo-Shorey indicated that there is a mention of homebound in the attendance policy, and was wondering if the wording needed to be changed there as well. It will be looked into.

This policy will be brought back for a third reading next week, Monday, September 26th.

BOARD POLICY 701.1 – NAMING OF SCHOOL DISTRICT FACILITIES DISCUSSION – Mr. Giordano hopes he has provided enough information to the board in order to move forward with this policy. He did not want to overwhelm the board with details from other districts, so Dr. Donaher and he took out what they thought were the salient points of those policies, but if the board does want to see any of those policies in their entirety, he has a copy of the one they did in Salisbury School District. They particularly like the distinction between naming rights and recognition of accomplishments or contribution to the district and naming rights in consideration of financial contribution, and this policy does that. Mr. Burkhardt stated he would like to see a full policy and why should our district reinvent the

wheel if there is something out there that can serve our needs. Mr. Giordano distributed the Salisbury School District policy. A general discussion was held regarding naming for recognitions vs. for financial donations. Our current policy mentions it, but does not really separate them or have separate guidelines Dr. Roy said. Mrs. Leeson thanked Mr. Giordano for the summary. Personally she likes all the provisions and policy distinctions that were included. Dr. Roy said they could come back with a more detailed policy incorporating some of these particular provisions.

A discussion was held regarding the waiting period. Mr. Faccinetto likes the waiting period, at least a five-year waiting period. Mrs. Cann asked from nomination or... Mr. Faccinetto replied it could be from end of service, retirement, etc. Mrs. Leeson added that the financial contribution would not have a waiting period as recognition would. Dr. Roy stated that it is good the district is revisiting this policy and setting up clear procedures that would be helpful to everybody. Mrs. Leeson would like to have a wall of fame for recognition or some type of recognition item, not just naming buildings, because one of her concerns in the naming rights is that these buildings were built with public funds. These are really Bethlehem facilities paid for by the Bethlehem residents, Mrs. Leeson said. She has a problem naming things after people when the funds have come from the taxpayers. Mr. McKeon asked Dr. Roy what was his philosophy in naming buildings vs. auditorium or within the confines of the building walls. Dr. Roy replied, "I think a more detailed policy is good because it could be a slippery slope when you start naming things. I would lean much more towards naming components of buildings as oppose to entire buildings." Mr. Giordano stated that Dr. Donaher and he would get together and come up with a more detailed policy that includes the components of these differences that do not conflict with each other and that would be good for the district.

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER LEADER POSITIONS – Dr. Silva referred to these positions as middle management within our organizational structure. Dr. Silva stated, "Last year when we changed the teaming model or eliminated the teaming model at the middle school, we also eliminated the team leaders because now there are no teams for them to lead as well as the period of the day that was reserved during the school day for teachers to act as team leaders to solve the problems in their specific content areas or among their grade levels." Dr. Silva created a chart of the total expenditure in regards to the team leaders. \$56,000 was spent last year on that mid-level management of the academic program. He stated those are very important positions for middle school principals who use them extensively. The high schools use the system of department chairs, which is a very powerful system. Dr. Silva's suggestion, after working this summer with the four middle school principals and the BEA to address the impact of that change of teaming, was to create a new organizational structure of team leaders where we would have some content area leaders and grade level leaders. Instead of a large number of team leaders who did both content leadership and grade level leadership within the school day with a dedicated period, he is suggesting a more cost effective but still structured system of content area leaders and grade level leaders which total about \$40,770. The current budget has \$56,268 and would only spend \$40,770. The amount saved would be \$15,498 and time saved in that area which we are getting through the six teaching periods. With the cooperation of the BEA, a Memorandum of Understanding was created for one year to see how it goes.

Mr. Tenaglia asked, "The \$56,000 was from the 10-11 school year, the district did away with the teaming concept, but you kept the stipends in the budget?" Dr. Silva replied, "We knew we were going to have to move to some type of leadership of the teacher leadership positions. We just had to use the summer to develop what those job responsibilities would be. We never thought we would have no teacher leadership at the middle level, but as far as the budget we just rolled over the existing cost." Mrs. Leeson asked what does the district pay the department chairs at the high schools. Dr. Silva answered \$2,587 on the first step. He referred Mrs. Leeson to the chart on what it would cost for each leader. Dr. Silva explained what the definition of a content leader and grade leader would be, and the expense at each middle school. Mrs. Leeson was concerned with the tight budget coming up and having to cut other things next year in order to afford these positions. Dr. Silva stated they currently are tightening the belt this year in saving that degree of money, and it also aligns with the new organizational structure post teaming. He also added that this structure is very helpful to his office because now there would be a specific content area person at the

middle level if he wanted to bring in four content area leaders to work on a curriculum issue, or if there is a grade 7 pressing issue, he can bring them in to do it.

HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT CHAIR – Dr. Silva commented that before the district pockets all \$15,498, he is also recommending adding a department chair of guidance at Freedom and at Liberty. He stated the guidance department does not have a voice, and they play a very strong role in the data-driven college-oriented programs that he is looking to develop. He added that the guidance chair would assist our district-wide effort to increase school performance. Dr. Silva said, “We have the opportunity now to bring in that person with those expectations in our new school improvement model with our data-driven goals at a time we can do it in our very revenue neutral way staying within the money saved from the middle school. Organizationally speaking a strong guidance leadership at both high schools in an academic program that we are really trying to push the career and college readiness.”

Mr. Agretto also added that this position would be beneficial to the Special Education Department and to the district’s Chapter 15 service agreement plans, coordination of and implementation of those documents each and every year. He said, “Those are items that need to get to teams at the beginning of the year and at semester breaks in order to make sure and ensure that those service agreements are being implemented appropriately and in a timely manner, and so the guidance counselors are going to be trained starting tomorrow or this week on getting onto the system in IEP Plus to make sure that every Chapter 15 service agreement in grades K-12 is on IEP Plus, so that teachers have easy access to those documents to make sure and ensure that the delivery of service is the accommodations that meets kids’ needs. This will be a great asset to make sure that this service plans are being implemented appropriately and timely.” Dr. Silva said his goal is not to pull responsibility from the assistant principals, but these are sort of new enhancements related to guidance services within our schools.

Mrs. Cann asked if the chairperson would be a guidance counselor. Dr. Silva replied yes. Mrs. Cann commented that this would be a really good idea to have one person setting some kind of model. Mrs. Leeson asked Dr. Silva if this individual would have lighter responsibilities within the guidance department. Dr. Silva stated it would be just a stipend on top of their regular job. Mrs. Leeson asked if they were limited in the number of hours they would work under the stipend. Dr. Silva replied they would resemble the department chair job description, and the hours would be 12-13 beyond their regular time. Mrs. Leeson asked, “What comes first the chicken or the egg, do we restructure and get a better structure in place and then start looking at a department chair, or do we look at the current structure we know is not working very well?” Dr. Silva believes that a strong department chair of guidance at both high schools would work to connect those pieces in both directions not just who the point person is to talk with post secondary but who is the point person to talk about transition services from the middle schools to the high schools – right now the grade level principals and grade level guidance counselors move up with the grades. He thinks if the district has that person, we do not need the structural changes yet. This would be an improvement on our current system.

Mrs. Leeson asked if there was a limitation to only 10 hours at the middle schools and after that do they get paid additional money. Dr. Silva said the district would not be looking for them to go beyond that amount of hours. Their hours are under the MOU not just to be descriptive of all of the duties they would have afterwards but all of the ones that would be assigned by the principal to do. Mr. McKeon commented that the board should have been made aware when they were doing the teaming cuts that there were thoughts about a replacement or a substitute for that philosophy. He further stated even though Dr. Silva says it is budget neutral, someone reading that would think the district is adding personnel. Mr. McKeon requested that going forward, if the administration is working on something, the board does not need all the specifics but at least bring it up for discussion, so when recommendations are put through they have a recollection of discussing this in the past. Dr. Silva said, “Short of having a formal proposal on the table, during all of the discussions related to converting to a non-team middle school whether it would be the schedule of the day, the responsibilities of the teachers, leadership structure we knew we had to bring it in under cost of what was there already. It took us all summer.” Mrs. Follweiler asked if there are criteria that the candidates would have to meet to fill it. She did not know how department chairs

were selected. Dr. Silva replied that the criteria are on the job description. She asked Dr. Silva to expand on the need of the Grade 6, 7, 8 level leaders. He gave the board examples on what the grade level leaders would do. He also gave the difference of responsibilities between the grade level leaders and the content area leaders. Mrs. Leeson asked why the grade level leader responsibilities could not be “as assigned” activities. Dr. Silva answered that the required amount of time, coordination, planning it would be easier to do it without the as assigned because there may be other things that the principal will be using them for during their as assigned time that are still important. Mrs. Leeson currently does not support the grade level leaders and is not sure that she now supports the content area leaders at their cost for only 10 hours of work. Mrs. Leeson said, “I support the concept of the content area leader, and I think, but I am not sure if we should negotiate a little better. Dr. Silva said those 10 hours are beyond the school day, and they would be doing a lot of work during the school day that their colleagues will not be doing because they are receiving a stipend. Mr. Faccinnetto asked Dr. Silva to confirm that this is a one-year MOU so if it does not work or it turns out that it is not the best fit, we are not tied into it for next year. Mrs. Ortiz stated this is a wonderful thing because the teaming was taken away in the middle school. Mr. Faccinnetto asked if the board agreed to put this on the agenda for Monday, September 26, 2011. The board did not object.

INFORMATION ITEMS – Mr. Giordano provided the board with some information regarding staffing and number of furloughed employees being brought back. He handed the board a staffing summary. On the first page, he reviewed the enrollment numbers used during budget preparations and the actual three-day enrollment numbers. He also reviewed the cuts made for 2011-2012; there was a reduction of 70 positions in allocation. There were 52 furloughed teachers, 20 in elementary and 32 in secondary, and that included partial furloughs in the 52. Due to unexpected retirement, resignations, a need for half-year or full-year LTSs and building subs, furloughed employees were brought back. All these were included in the call back numbers. He did not include anyone that was furloughed who is coming back as a day-to-day sub. He only included those coming back that were a full semester or full year assignment. He stated 12 elementary and 11 secondary furloughed employees were brought back. Of the furloughed employees, there were two resignations in elementary and three in secondary because they either accepted positions elsewhere or decided to resign for one reason or another.

Mr. Giordano stated that on the second page of the handout it lists the non-teaching positions such as teacher assistants: 21 furloughed, 4 resignations, 7 brought back. Hall Monitors remained the same. Family Development Specialist: 16 furloughed, 1 resigned, and due to renewal of a grant, 4 of those specialists were brought back. ASPIRE Site Coordinators: 5 furloughed. Clerical/Secretary: 4.5 positions, no furloughs due to some vacancies. Instructional Act 93: 2 positions reduced in the C&I office – 1 principal, 1 person retired, and the others were placed in positions that were open. Noninstructional Act 93: 5 positions that were eliminated, no one had to be furloughed because they were unfilled vacancies that the district chose not to fill and 1 person resigned.

On the third page, shows the activity since the budget passed. Enrollment increases at both Marvine and Donegan in kindergarten, and in order to fulfill that important need, Mr. Giordano worked with Mrs. Tate and was able to fund them through Title II funds. There was also an issue with enrollment and case load requirements with gifted at the middle school, and in order to satisfy that need and a need that occurred at the middle school with sharing a science teacher between Freedom and Nitschmann which turned out to be very difficult to do, he was able to free up some allocation in other areas and use them to satisfy those needs. In the noninstructional area, he listed that the four family development specialists were brought back in a grant renewal.

Mrs. Leeson said, “We are down 316 from what was projected, and yet we are going to add six more people.” Mr. Giordano said he was not adding six more people, but 2.1 in allocation. He mentioned 1.0 does not get funded by GOB, which is the kindergarten positions funded by a grant. The other allocations are a .8 and .3 position which total 1.1, and that amount was taken from elsewhere where he was able to acquire some allocation with some movement. Mrs. Leeson asked if there were any areas in which staffing could be reduced due to the decrease in enrollment. She also said numbers were more significant at the high schools. Mr. Giordano only reviewed the science numbers but has not examined class sizes as

they played out at the high school, but will do with Dr. Silva and take a look at that. Mr. Giordano said, “The priorities at this time were the kindergarten numbers that clearly needed to be addressed and the gifted caseloads at the middle schools which were causing problems with both the services to the students and BEA where we have a grievance to how many students assigned to a gifted teacher. Mrs. Leeson recalls getting the most accurate numbers in October. She wanted to know with this reduction in students is there anywhere we can make some reductions. Second question she had is not just the teachers, but also we allocate resources for every student and with it being down 316, there should be some money savings – for example each building gets allocated for the number of students it has.

A discussion was held regarding sick banks and current procedures. Mr. Giordano would like to have written guidelines or parameters around what the board is approving with sick banks and then he would manage that with the various bargaining units going forward and not have to bring them to the board every single time a request is brought to Human Resources. Mrs. Leeson stated that it has not been burdensome process for the board since not a lot of requests come through for sick banks. Mr. Giordano added that since the board approves these once a month sometimes these things need to happen more quickly and cannot officially happen, and he has one right now, pretty sad story, and technically it cannot be put in place until September 27th. Mrs. Follweiler asked if he was proposing outlining a practice or propose a policy. He said it does not have to be a policy it could be a procedure. Dr. Roy commented that there really is a procedure that has been followed when they request a sick bank. Mrs. Follweiler agrees that it is not a burden, sensitivity of the nature of the request so timing could be an issue, but would want to see something in writing that the board approved this in case there are questions down the road. She would have a problem with it being a policy, it does not have to be at that level, but something very clear and easy to find and the same treatment across the board. Dr. Roy stated there were two requests pending for this evening in executive session.

A discussion was held regarding certifications and substitutes. Mr. Giordano stated that Mrs. Follweiler had a question about substitutes and substitute status. He stated that there would be 36 certificated substitutes being added on Monday nights’ agenda, which would bring the total number of substitutes to a little over 300. A discussion was also held regarding the substitute AESOP system. Mrs. Follweiler asked if the minutes from 1999 can be sent to her since they are not on the website. The minutes included an item on emergency certifications. She wants to see what the board voted on that night and if any permanent changes were voted on. She stated it was Item Number 11 – Emergency Certifications. Dr. Roy will have those minutes sent to the board.

Mr. Giordano wanted to give the board a heads up on the EAP program. Every year the EAP agreement is renewed. It is up for renewal and overdue. They want to charge the district \$2.00 per employee that is eligible for EAP, which would be everybody, and it would cost somewhere around \$11,000-\$12,000. In looking back on the actual usage, the biggest year was \$3,000. Our business manager was not at all happy to hear that the EAP is now going to cost the district considerably more. He is working with the EAP provider on other kinds of arrangements, maybe a by-use arrangement only, but the bottom line is that if the district wants to provide this benefit for our employees, it is going to cost the district more than it has cost in the past. He is working really hard to make it less. In terms of looking at other providers, he has had a couple of conversations with St. Luke’s. They simply are not willing or able to take us on at this time because of their other expansions; our district is a little frightening – we are too big. Mr. Giordano also said, “There are not too many other players out there that are big enough to be able to take us on. Another reason that our usage has not been that great is that I think there has not been too much promotion of it in recent years, so I am not so sure that employees are taking advantage of it like they might if we did a little more promoting of it. No answers tonight, but as I do my work, there are times I need to be recommending or referring somebody to EAP so I have to get this settled at some point. I am hoping by the October Human Resources Committee Meeting we would be able to come to you with a renewal for our EAP provider that would be something we could recommend based on working the best arrangement and contract that we could.”

Mr. McKeon asked if there were contractual issues if we decided not to provide this. Mr. Giordano answered that he does not think so, but would have to examine the seven different agreements and see if there is anything in any of those agreements. Mr. Tenaglia asked if consideration were being given to self-insured, since the district paid \$3,000 last year, and it would cost \$12,000 to EAP. Dr. Roy replied, "Yes, we are looking at a lot of options, pay as we go without the overhead, etc. With this group we have been paying as we go, now they are saying there has to be an overhead administrative fee." Mr. Tenaglia asked if there was a limitation per individual. Yes, if we found another provider willing to take us on at just the usage rate – pay as we go, and the couple of places we talked to are a little nervous taking on a large organization even though our utilization has not been great, Dr. Roy said. He added, "We even thought about small private providers that are out there where an employee goes and we reimburse, but then we lose some consistency especially when we want people to go somewhere."

AGENDA ITEMS FOR SEPTEMBER 26, 2011, REGULAR BOARD MEETING

MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING:

REMOVAL OF BOARD POLICY 117 – HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION AND APPROVAL OF NEW BOARD POLICY 204.1 – No objections. This item will be placed on the September 26, 2011, Regular Board Meeting Agenda for approval.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING – MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER LEADERS – No objections. This item will be placed on the September 26, 2011, Regular Board Meeting Agenda for approval.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR – None

OPEN FORUM – None

Michael Faccinetto adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: _____
Nitza S. Yerger, Confidential Secretary to the Director of Human Resources